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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a detailed account of the inception and growth both of the Shaker Historical Society and its museum and library in Shaker Heights, Ohio. It analyzes secondary sources of information and history, primary sources such as eyewitness accounts, records, annual reports, unpublished histories, and museum circulation records. Library policies are ascertained and services identified. Informal interviews with the museum curator and librarian indicate that the organization is growing in the area of professionalism and pro-actively planning for the future. Through the library and museum's collection, staff and service and through the efforts of the society's current members, the Shaker faith and lifestyle remain accessible to today's inquirer. As the remaining handful of Shakers become extinct, this library and historical society will preserve a record of their life and culture. (Contains 40 references.) (MAS)

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A COMMUNITY DOCUMENTS ITS HISTORY: A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE SHAKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE ELIZABETH NORD LIBRARY

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Bonnie J. Bolton

November, 1994

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Kent State University 1969

M.L.S. Kent State University 1994

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The graceful shape of an oval box; the elegant simplicity of functional design; a peaceful, orderly society, these are the qualities that draw one to the romance of the Shaker way of life. In the milieu of popular culture, the artifacts of Shaker life are fast becoming icons, treasured because they point to something beyond themselves. Who were the Shakers? What is the history that the silent artifacts witnessed? "The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences notes that 'the historical past exists only to the extent that there is an image of it - in other words, to the extent that it is recreated in the mind' " (Busha and Harter 1980, 92). Stein (1992) feels that what has been created, in the case of the Shakers, is a cultural myth derived from a mood of collective nostalgia.

Today there are fewer than a dozen Shakers remaining in colonies in Maine and New Hampshire. These brothers and sisters have become the stewards of the religious society founded two hundred years ago by Mother Ann Lee. As these remaining Shakers become extinct, it is important to preserve a record of the Society's life and culture. The Shaker heritage is part of the fabric of American history and the Christian religion. As such,

careful documentation of Shaker beliefs and life style can add to our understanding of both.

Background of the Study

The Shakers, a Christian sect, " . . . conducted one of the most successful experiments in religious communal living in nineteenth century America" (Encyclopedia Americana 1993, 650). Officially known as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing or the Millennial Church they believed that the Second Coming had been accomplished through the person of Ann Lee.

It was from the industrial town of Manchester, England that the Shaker odyssey began. There, in 1736 Ann Lee was born. In January of 1762 she was married to a local blacksmith and rapidly gave birth to four children, all of whom died in early childhood. In 1758 Ann became attracted to a religious sect, known as Shaking Quakers, led by James and Jane Wardley. She spent fifteen years with this group.

> The Shaking Quakers of Manchester were religious fanatics, zealots in their enthusiasm and bold in their methods . . . Members of the sect spoke with urgency about an impending apocalyptic judgment. With equal harshness they condemned the churches of the land, the clergy and most established ecclesiastical practices (Stein 1992, 5).

These Quakers acquired their derisive nick name, the Shakers, from their practice of whirling, trembling and shaking during their worship

services. The participants believed they could rid themselves of sin "by engaging in such ecstatic religious exercises" (Encyclopedia Americana 1993, 650).

In 1770, Ann's subversive activities landed her in prison where she experienced visions that caused her to conclude that sexual intercourse was the principal cause of man's sin and sexual activity must be avoided (Encyclopedia Americana 1993, 650). "She felt divinely called to establish a church offering redemption from sexual sin" (Morse 1989, 31). Another vision convinced her to go to America which she did in 1774 (Newman 1989, 304).

The eight Believers that arrived in America settled in Watervliet, New York, north of Albany. Nothing is heard of them until the year 1780, the year that marks the " . . . opening of the Shaker gospel in America" (Stein 1992, 10). Van Kolken enumerates the basic tenets of the Shaker faith as being "celebacy, separation from the world, communal sharing of goods, confession of sins, equality of the sexes and pacifism" (VanKolken 1985, 16). "Celibacy was perceived as the inevitable and predestined state by which creation evolved from flesh toward spirit" (Deignan 1992, 232). Mother Ann died on 8 September 1784 at the age of forty-eight (Morse 1989, 34). She never saw the establishment of a Shaker Village (Newman 1989, 309).

The North Union Community

The North Union Shaker community was established on land that was originally part of the Connecticut Western Reserve. In 1796 Moses Cleveland surveyed the Reserve and platted the area into four townships. One of the four townships was later named Warrensville by its first permanent settlers, Daniel and Margaret Warren (Piercy 1951, 10-13).

The northwest corner of the Warrensville Township became home to the Shakers through the family of Revolutionary War veteran Jacob Russell, an early settler of the area. Jacob's son, Ralph, had become interested in the Shakers. He went to Union Village, the power seat of the Western Ministry, where he was converted. The Ministry persuaded him to return home to found a community. The colony, North Union, founded in 1822, on land relinquished by the Russell family, became formally organized in 1828 (Cathcart 1938, 10-11).

In 1823 the Center Family was formed to govern the colony. Next the Mill Family was formed to oversee the operation of the mills. It was from the Doan Brook Valley, where the mills were built, that the " . . . colony took the spiritual name of Valley of God's Pleasure" (Conlin 1961, 4). The last family established was the Children's Family. In 1837 this family became known as the Gathering Family for novices or potential

believers (McIlhenny 1988, 26).

The collecting efforts of John MacLean resulted in locating, at Union Village, the official chronicles of North Union. The manuscript, known as the Prescott Papers, recounts the story of North Union from its opening in 1822 to just prior to its closing in 1889. The entire document was written by elder James Prescott (Piercy 1951, 5). Prescott, a stonemason, immigrated from Massachusetts to Cleveland where he was engaged by one of the Russells to lay the foundation for the community's first building. Liking the life he encountered there, he stayed and was admitted to the society in 1826. He became an elder, teacher and its chronicler (Piercy 1951, 5). Prescott's death in 1888 gave the ministry at New Lebanon the opportunity to disband North Union (Conlin 1961, 5).

As in other colonies, decline set in after the Civil War. At North Union consolidation began.

> In 1872, the Gathering Family was moved to the Mill Family and its property rented out. Not long thereafter, the Mill Family was consolidated with the Center Family. By 1880, the total North Union population had dwindled to 40 (McIlhenny 1988, 31).

In 1881 the North Union Believers spent $732 more than they made. They were "heavily dependent on outside suppliers for basic foodstuffs" (Stein 1992, 244). The largest cash outlay that year . . . was for hired labor because there were not enough members to do the work" (Stein 1992, 244).

When Prescott died in 1888 there were thirty-four believers in residence.

Joseph Slingerland, had been appointed by the ministry at New Lebanon to " . . . deal with the deteriorating financial situation in the West" (Stein 1992, 280). He was sent to Union Village where "he became directly involved in the decision to close North Union by refusing to pay the taxes on that property, which Union Village had been assisting with for a number of years" (Stein 1922, 280).

On 24 October 1889 the Society at North Union was disbanded. Many of the Society's goods and implements were sold at auction. The remaining believers went to live with the Shakers at Union Village, Ohio and Watervliet, New York (Stein 1992, 245).

"Three years after the dissolution of North Union [1892] its land was sold by Union Village to a group of Cleveland bankers . . . " (Klyver 1992, 183). The bankers called their organization the Shaker Heights Land Company. Trustee Benjamin Gates represented the Shakers' Central Ministry at the sale. Slingerman and Gates were involved in land speculation on behalf of the Shakers. One of their purchases, a pre-Civil War plantation in Georgia, was made using "assets derived in part from the sale of North Union . . . " (Stein 1992, 282). In 1893 the bankers sold the land to a Buffalo land syndicate for $316,000 (Klyver 1992, 183).

In 1905 two brothers, Oris and Mantis Van Sweringen, began taking

out options on parcels of the old Shaker lands. Eventually their holdings totaled 4,000 acres for which they paid over $1 million. On this land they developed their envisioned, model residential community. When the development was incorporated as Shaker Village in 1911 the population was two hundred. Twenty years later, in 1931, when the City of Shaker Heights was incorporated, the population had grown to 18,000 (City of Shaker Heights, 1976).

The Van Sweringens were interested in marketing an exclusive community to Cleveland's wealthy. To give notice of their intent to build such a community the Van Sweringens "mounted a publicity campaign . . . publishing an array of pamphlets, newspaper advertisements, leaflets and broadsides" (Stilgoe 1988, 241). These attractive brochures are included in the holdings of the Shaker Historical Society, as are the original sales portfolios used by Van Sweringen agents.

One of the earliest constructed homes, built in 1910, was that of Mr. Louis E. Myers. This spacious mansion eventually became the permanent home of the Shaker Historical Society. The site and building are reflective of the community they document. The property was once part of the North Union apple orchard, while the home itself is partially constructed of stone from the Shaker Mill Family quarry.

By the mid 1920s some historically minded citizens were already

interested in the Shaker community that inhabited the North Union Colony. Several Shaker school teachers were collecting artifacts to illustrate their lessons on Shaker history. "In 1929 Dr. Frederick H. Baird, Superintendent of Schools, directed that a unit on the Shakers be incorporated in the third grade curriculum" (Shaker Historical Society 1980, 11). This unit continues to be taught today to all Shaker third grade students.

In September of 1947, the festivities surrounding the one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of the settlement of the Shakers at North Union, galvanized interested citizens into pursuing the formation of a society devoted to promoting an appreciation of the Shaker heritage and the history of Shaker Heights. Clippings from the Heights Press of 10 October 1947 note that "A charter to incorporate the Shaker Historical Society as a non-profit organization, read and approved at the Society's October 15 meeting in the Shaker Library, has been filed in Columbus." Artifacts and documents began to accumulate and were moved from the library's basement to the recreation room of author Caroline Piercy's home. The Shaker Historical Museum was established nine years later, in 1956, to house the Shaker Historical Society's collection of artifacts. During the year artifacts were moved from the Piercy basement to Moreland School, Room 4, Shaker Heights City School District.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to present a systematic, documented account of the growth of the Shaker Historical Society and its Elizabeth Nord Library, Shaker Heights, Ohio. Its scope will include recognition of the social, political, intellectual and cultural environment in which the formative events occurred. Its intention is to acquaint the reader with the facility and its resources.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although little published research is available on the Shaker Historical society, some of the related literature is reported. One of the major sources is a guide to the collection of the Shaker Historical Society which also includes a selected bibliography (Shaker Historical Society 1980). This guide includes numerous annotated illustrations and the front matter includes brief accounts of the histories of North Union, Shaker Heights, Warrensville Township, and the Shaker Historical Society.

Caroline Piercy presents a thorough treatment of the North Union community's history and the Shaker way of life. She includes a brief history of Warrensville Township within which the community developed. The second part of her book includes excerpts from the Record Book of North Union (Prescott 1822). This manuscript was a day by day account of life in the North Union Village.

Mary Lou Conlin gives a brief account of the founding of the Shaker Historical Society and its purpose statement. Purpose number six is "To maintain a library which contains books and maps, historical records and manuscripts for the assistance of students and writers" (Conlin 1961).

The route of the walking tour of historical sites is also noted.

A bound volume of unpublished information, collected by former trustee Richard D. Klyver, offers the most complete record of the Shaker Historical Society from the years prior to its founding in 1947 to 1977. The volume is a year by year record of the society's history and accomplishments. The appendix includes a copy of the Code of Regulations, the then current by-laws, a copy of the agreement between the State of Ohio and the Shaker Historical Society pertaining to the society's property, a review of the historical sites in Shaker Heights and a roster of the society's officers, 1947-1977. The volume also includes, flyers, newspaper clippings and pictures.

From time to time the local magazine, Shaker: The Community Newsmagazine, published by the City of Shaker Heights, features articles of historical interest. McIlhenny (1988) offers a historic overview of the North Union Community. McNulty (1986) interviews long term Shaker residents to obtain personal historical insights about the area. Among those residents interviewed is Clay Herrick, former president of the Historical Society. His brief statement recalls how the Society's present facility was acquired. Mcnulty (1987) also contributed an article featuring the twentieth century development of the former North Union landholdings. This subject is germane to the development of the

Historical Society as it is situated on land that was part of the original Shaker holdings.

To commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the incorporation of the city of Shaker Heights, the Shaker Heights Public Library published Seventy-five Years, An Informal History of Shaker Heights, edited by David Molyneaux and Sue Sackman. Library director Barbara Luton notes that, though the history of the North Union is well documented, there is no history of the city. Between 1939 and 1940 the historic research division of the Works Project Administration Library project compiled such a history but the unpublished document has become lost over the years. This anniversary publication is an informal oral history written by a group of volunteers who interviewed long time residents who were willing to share their knowledge of earlier times. The Shaker Heights Historical Society is one of the institutions featured in this work.

Cathcart (1938), a contributor to Shaker Heights: Then and Now, gives a complete review of the history of the North Union colony. This publication of the Shaker Heights Board of Education, under the sponsorship of the Shaker Heights PTA, marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the City of Shaker Heights. Chapter two, "Shaker Village," follows the community's development through 1930 when it applied for a city charter. The remainder of the publication traces the

development of the Shaker School System.

John P. MacLean (1907) discusses the rise, decline and closing of the North Union Society. This work was published just before MacLean discovered the Prescott Manuscript at Union Village, Ohio.

James Gilreath (1973) recounts a wonderful tale as he relates the story of the rivalry between John P. MacLean and Wallace H. Cathcart that resulted in the world's foremost collection of Shakeriana at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio. MacLean, one time librarian of the Historical Society and compiler of the first and, until 1973, only Shaker bibliography, was sending his acquisitions to the Library of Congress. Cathcart, the society's first director, felt that the Shaker materials were part of the history of the Western Reserve, thus within the scope of the society, since the North Union Village was within its boundaries. He nurtured a friendship with Shaker eldress Catherine Allen who helped him locate and obtain many documents. In February of 1912, after only six months of collecting, Cathcart lacked only 128 of the 523 items listed in MacLean's bibliography (Gilreath 1973). He also had many items not listed. This extensive collection is but a ten minute drive from the collection at the Shaker Historical Society.

Cathy Newman (1989) explores the current status of the two remaining Shaker communities. She interviews the resident Shakers and

discusses the rift between the two communities. She also treats the topic of the disposition of Shaker artifacts.

A thorough treatment of Shaker theology is presented by Kathleen Deignan (1992) as she explains the Shaker's understanding of Christ's Second Coming. The Shaker's eschatological tradition has been examined through two modes of inquiry. First a historical inquiry examines the texts from various periods to discover basic theological themes. Second, a theological inquiry is conducted to interpret the subject matter from the selected texts. Deignan unfolds the pneumatic, universal and progressive character of this radical expression of the Christian religion for the reader.

Stephen Stein (1992) presents a current, in-depth, general study of the Shaker experience in America. He divides Shaker history into five broad periods. In Part V Stein recounts the society's history since 1948. This period in Shaker history has never been the subject of formal discourse. Stein believes this is due to the controversy between the two remaining communities and the restrictions placed on access to documents that relate to the recent past. Stein believes that the high interest in Shaker material culture has itself become a factor in the Shaker story. He states that the material culture exists in symbiosis with the actual believers causing the central force in the relation to be

the mythical Shakers created by popular culture not the true society (Stein 1993). He hopes his work will advance serious scholarship and broaden the understanding of Shakerism among the population that admires them. Throughout the work there are many references to the decline of the North Union colony.

The most complete Shaker bibliography assembled to date is that of Mary Richmond (1977). This annotated work is presented in two volumes. Volume I includes works by the Shakers. This volume also contains a section on legal cases concerning the Shakers. Volume II covers works about the Shakers. The entries represent works through 1972. An addendum covers works from 1973-74. Manuscripts are not included in this bibliography. Symbols represent the library that owns the work as indicated in the National Union Catalog at the Library of Congress. The extensive introduction contains a wealth of information. Richmond notes that the Shakers were not overly concerned with preserving their manuscripts and publications. As the communities disbanded and closed, aged and discouraged members had concerns other than preserving their publications and records.

More than twenty years have elapsed since the publication of Richmond's bibliography. In this interval new works continue to be published. Martinez (1990) points out the possibility of a published union

catalog of Shaker holdings through the commonalty of the MARC format. Early in 1990 the director of the Shaker Museum in Old Chatham, New York, invited representatives from the six major repositories of Shaker publications and manuscripts to meet to discuss common concerns. The group agreed that it needed a common thesaurus. At their next meeting in late 1990, Richard McKinstry, the Winterthur librarian, will give a presentation about the MARC format. Presently, none of the libraries enter their records into OCLC or RLIN. Each repository does, however, own a computer and McKinstry foresees a time when a software product such as Micro MARC might facilitate the pooling of data to create a published union catalog of Shaker holdings. McKinstry also proposes that the libraries report their records to the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections. This catalog is then loaded into the RLIN Archives and Manuscript file.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this study of the historical background of the Elizabeth Nord Library of the Shaker Historical Society, Shaker Heights, Ohio, the historical method was employed. Primary sources such as eyewitness accounts, records, annual reports, unpublished histories and circulation records of the museum were examined and analyzed. Informal interviews with key persons, the museum curator and librarian, were conducted. The standards of internal and external criticism were applied to the evidence collected. Secondary sources were consulted and incorporated to complete the profile. The library's historical development was plotted. Its goals and objectives, policies and rules were ascertained. Actual physical inspection of the facility resulted in a discussion of the library's current holdings, physical plant, services and use made of the collection.

Herrick (1985) has identified a body of standard reference tools and professional resources that she defines as necessary for the museum library. These standards include three types of information resources: (1) materials to support research in the museum's subject field, (2) works on

museum administration, and (3) library science tools. The Shaker Historical Society Library was examined in terms of these information sources.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Actual inspection of the Prescott manuscript, entitled the Record, provides the reader with an interesting perspective of the North Union community. The first entry reads, "September 1828 church covenant signed by thirty-seven individuals . . . seventeen brethren and twenty sisters" (Prescott 1828). A major portion of the document recounts the appointment and release of elders and eldresses from various positions of authority within the community. The reader also finds many accounts of visitors traveling between Union Village in southern Ohio and the parent ministry in New Lebanon, New York. To call the settlement at North Union a way station would not be inaccurate. Entries also note the erection of the community's various buildings. Some entries are of a more spiritual nature. The entry of 29 October 1843 reads as follows:

> Sabbath Day. Among the many supernatural and spiritual Gifts which we had been informed was abounding among Believers was the Gift of talking in Departed Spirits, spirits that once lived on the earth and inhabited human bodies had now returned and took possession of the bodies of some individuals of both sexes in every society. This Gift had, now, reached North Union for the first time (Prescott 1843, 22).

On 10 February 1845 we are told of a visit by the Heavenly Father.

> Visit of the Heavenly Father
> A brief sketch of the Heavenly Father's visit at North Union. . .
> Way and manner of His Comeing
> On the tenth of February at nine o'clock in the morning in the lower part of the Meeting house commenced the physical visit and notice of the Heavenly Father through four of His chosen and Inspired Instruments . . . two Brethren and two Sisters (Prescott 1845, 25)

During the time of the visitation Prescott's script becomes very compact, with a page or more devoted to each day of the visit. We are told that "the Heavenly Father stayed about two weeks" (Prescott 1845, 37).

After closing the community in 1889, the Shakers appointed Matthew Carter, of Union Village, as executor of the North Union property. He, in turn, hired D.S. Stoffer of Cleveland to manage the business affairs relating to the disbanded colony. When Stoffer and his wife moved into the Mill family house they found it "furnished just as it was when the Shaker occupants left it" (Klyver 1992, 181). It was decided to offer the remaining goods for sale at auction. The auction was held 21 April 1890. Purchased items remained on the premises awaiting delivery the next day. The next morning, as Stoffer prepared for the deliveries, he discovered smoke coming from the workshed across the road. The Clevleland Plain Dealer of 25 April 1890 gives an account of the fire: "In a little while the old Mill house was engulfed in flames . . . All the personal property . . . belonging to Mr. Stoffer [and] the articles that had sold at auction . . .

vanished in the . . . blaze . . . The cause remains a mystery."

By the end of the decade the former North Union lands were overgrown and the buildings in total disrepair. It wouldn't be long before all traces of the community vanished. There was, however, an enterprising young photographer, Louis Baus, who was interested in the remains of the former Shaker community. Between 1880 and 1905 Mr. Baus photographed all the Shaker buildings, landmarks and some of the remaining Shakers. Mr. Baus was a staff photographer for the Cleveland Plain Dealer from 1911 until his death in 1949. His Plain Dealer obituary of 23 October 1949 notes that he had "assembled a complete group of pictures of the old Shaker settlement in Shaker Heights before the suburb was laid out." This album of eighty-three photographs, with hand written captions, assembled by Mr. Baus in 1931, is part of the society's holdings. In November of 1967, trustee Frank Myers documented to Baus' son, Eugene Baus, how the society had made use of the photo album on loan to it, to persuade him to donate the album to the society. Among his lettered exhibits he notes that the album supplied the inspiration and motivation of Mrs. Pearl Lee Stark, the first teacher in the Shaker Schools to tell her students about the North Union Shakers. He also notes that prints made from the photos were used to "secure National Historic Landmark status for the two Shaker Lakes . . . " (Myers 1967). In a letter to Mr. Frank Myers,

from Eugene Baus, dated 27 December 1973, Mr. Baus states that he is "herewith . . . making an outright gift to your Shaker Historical Society of the Shakers and Kirtland Album of historic photos . . . " (Baus 1973).

From its inception, the historical society led an itinerant existence. The move from the Piercy home to Moreland School in 1956 was followed by a move to the basement of Boulevard School in 1966. Economies of space caused the school board to offer housing at Boulevard for the 1966-67 school year only. In August of 1966 trustee Frank Myers offered to donate his father's house at 16740 South Park Boulevard as a permanent home for the society and museum. The gift was contingent upon the Society raising funds to generate income sufficient for building repairs and maintenance. A six-page outline of the advantages of this course of action was presented to the Shaker Heights City Council. For four years the Shaker Heights City Council refused to rezone the property from single family to public use. The society contended that housing a museum on the property did not violate city law. Society president William Van Aken points out, as quoted in the SunPress of 29 October 1970, "Single -family zoned districts can be used for parks, libraries, museums and playgrounds as well as homes." The city also refused to issue building permits for remodeling of the property. By September of 1968 the society had moved into rented quarters in the commercial building at the corner of Chagrin

Boulevard and Lee Road.

During this time period, at the recommendation of Mrs. Elizabeth Nord, the society briefly considered combining with the Western Reserve Historical Society (Nord 1967). This idea was eventually rejected. Members felt that merging would mean the dissolution of the society and the end of the program in the Shaker Schools.

In December of 1968 the first steps were taken to remove the Myers' property from the legal jurisdiction of the city of Shaker Heights. In a letter to Mr. Daniel R. Porter, Director of the Ohio Historical Society, dated 24 December 1968, Mr. Frank A. Myers stated that he wished to donate the South Park property "to the State of Ohio, for use as an historical museum, with the specific understanding that it would be occupied by the Shaker Historical Society" (Myers 1968). The property was then deeded to the State of Ohio and leased back to the Society. The Cleveland Press of 16 October 1970 notes that, "By contracting with the state Department of Public Works the society is able to operate [the property] as a museum and ignore city zoning requirements." The society moved into its new quarters in September of 1970 and opened to the public in April of 1971.

As the society grew and moved its library grew and moved with it. On 15 September 1977 the library was designated as the Elizabeth B. Nord

Memorial Library. Mrs. Nord, who began her work with the society in 1947, at the age of seventy, was a founding member, its first curator and co-organizer of the library. For twenty-five years, until her death in 1972, at age ninety-two, Mrs. Nord was an active involved trustee. On the occasion of her ninety-second birthday, shortly before her death, she donated her personal collection of fifty books to the Shaker Museum Library. In the Journal dated Fall 1972 Mrs. Nord noted that the collection was to be circulated and enjoyed by as many as possible in the years to come. She hoped that her donation would be the beginning of a much larger, well used lending library.

In 1956 Mrs. Nord suggested a Women's committee be formed to act as an operating committee for the museum. Today this committee provides volunteers and financial aid to the museum and library. Membership on the Women's Committee is separate from society membership.

During 1957 Mrs. Sullivan, a graduate librarian trained at the Western Reserve Historical society under Wallace Cathcart, worked to organize the museum library. She also contributed a bound set of the Shaker Manifesto, a monthly journal published by the Shakers from 1871 to 1899, acquired from the Shakers at Sabbath Day Lake (Klyver 1977, 35).

In 1959 Mrs. Blanche Rogers was presented a life membership in the

society. Her husband, Herbert, was a descendent of the Russell family, founders of the North Union sect. Mrs. Rogers made a generous donation of their family's records, letters and photographs to the museum's collection (Klyver 1977, 38).

The society's newsletter The Journal began publication in October of 1965. This publication is "intended to acquaint members with the early history of the area, recollections of the Shakers, the history of Shaker Heights and Warrensville Township, and pertinent current news" (Richmond 1977, 211).

Mrs. Nord also established a Founders Fund in 1972. A gift of $1,000 from that fund was to be used to purchase books and cataloging supplies for the library (Klyver 1977, 88).

During the society's board meeting of 29 April 1975 considerable time was spent discussing the restoration and preservation of the library's books, photographs and manuscripts. An allocation of $150 was approved for the purchase of acid proof document cases and other supplies. A committee was appointed to study the concerns of the library. By October of 1975 new bookcases had been purchased for $500 (Klyver 1977, 104).

An article entitled "Progress in the Library" appears in the October 1976 issue of the Journal. It notes that a committee of seven women had

"undertaken the formidable task of reorganizing the society's library" (Journal 1976). Two of the women were identified as trained librarians. Their goal was to make the library a more useful facility for the increasing number of students who were using it.

Today, the library occupies what was once the home's master bedroom. The seventeen by twenty-three foot room contains seventy-seven linear feet of shelf space. The five-drawer map cabinet contains maps of Shaker, North Union, the Van Sweringen development, Warrensville, Ohio, Cuyahoga County, and the Western Reserve. Three, four-drawer file cabinets and one, two-drawer file contain the vertical files. Large portfolios are housed in the six by five foot closet. The library uses the Dewey Decimal Classification system. There are presently no circulation records. The library budget is a line item in the society's budget. Receipts for purchases are submitted to the treasurer. Memorial funds for education help to build the collection. The Women's Committee also provides acquisitions through its practice of honoring deceased members with donations to the collection. Although there are five titles in the collection concerned with topics pertinent to museum administration, the library is lacking in the standard reference tools and professional resources Herrick defines as necessary for the museum library.

Mrs. Mary Jo Groppe has been the society's librarian since April of 1987. Mrs. Groppe, a former teacher, holds a dergree in English from Chatham College She is a part time, paid staff employee and is available Tuesday through Friday during the museum hours of 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and other times by appointment. Mrs. Groppe notes that the library's thrust is three fold. Holdings document the Western Reserve, the local history of Shaker Heights and the Shakers of North Union. Each month in the Journal Mrs. Groppe publishes her column, "Loose Leaves: Notes from the Librarian." In the column she highlights new acquisitions as well as other treasurers the visitor can find in the collection. Also noted are research requests sought in the library's collection. Anyone may use the collection during the staffed hours. Borrowing is a privilege of museum membership. However, students, who may not wish to become members of the museum, may borrow materials by paying a refundable deposit. This policy accommodates patrons while protecting the collection. Mrs. Groppe receives a great variety of written and phone requests for information. A high school student, entering the National History Day contest, researched the effect of the Garden City Movement on urban geography. He won the state competition and placed fifth in the nation. Data was requested by the writers of The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History for its new biographical section. A student writing a paper on Shaker music came for

information. A free lance writer came for information on early female pioneers for a lecture she was preparing. A patron from Michigan called concerning a Revolutionary War ancestor buried in the Warrensville West cemetery. A Ph.D. candidate from the University of Minnesota wanted information on the founding and development of Shaker Heights. A writer, historian studying land use came in search of Shaker farm journals. A Washington D.C. collector writing an article on North Union furniture making for The Shaker Messenger, a scholarly Shaker journal, inquired about a rocker in his possession (Groppe 1994).

The Journal, dated Winter 1988, relates that a developer visited the library in hopes of finding a suitable name for new condominiums to be built by his company on Warrensville Center Road. He wanted to select a name that would reflect the heritage of the North Union Shakers. He decided on Prescott Place in honor of elder James Prescott, leader and chronicler of the North Union community (Klyver 1988).

Mrs. Groppe also noted that in the Spring of 1994 the soceity adopted a new logo created by a student in the Community Graphics program at the Cleveland Institute of Art. The handsome graphic, depicting two oval boxes and an apple, symbolic of the former orchard, graces the Society's publications.

A brief chat with curator Cathie Winans reveals that the last Shaker living at Canterbury, New Hampshire, Ethel Hudson, has recently died at the age of ninety-four. The community at Sabbath Day Lake, Maine, now houses the seven remaining Shakers. Mrs. Winans holds a master's degree in art history and museum studies from the Cleveland Museum of Art in association with Case Western Reserve University (Christian 1993). She is currently in the process of completing the steps necessary to have the museum accredited by the American Association of Museums. The society recently applied for and received Federally funded grants from the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) and the Conservation Assessment Program (CAP). The MAP grant will enable the museum to engage a museum professional to conduct a survey of their operations, the first step in the accreditation process. The CAP grant provides for two consultants, one to survey the museum's collection management and an architect to evaluate the physical plant. The reports from these surveys will guide the society in its conservation planning for the future (Winans 1994). Both Mrs. Winans and Mrs. Groppe take advantage of attending professional workshops to broaden their skills. During Mrs. Winans' first year as curator, (1992-1993), 2,600 visitors toured the Museum. This number includes school groups and visitors from twenty-six states and thirteen foreign countries (Winans 1993).

School district third grade teachers continue to work closely with the museum to present an inclusive, stimulating program. For the second time this spring, the society's education committee hosted the Students Study the Shakers exhibit from 15 May to 5 June 1994. On the final day of the exhibit students and their families and friends come to view student projects, tour the museum and enjoy a punch and cookies reception. This year more than seventy people attended the exhibit and reception (Rogers 1994).

Currently, the society's exhibit committee is completing a new permanent exhibit of North Union artifacts. Mrs. Groppe is compiling a bibliography to compliment the new exhibit. Included in the exhibit is the society's very first accession, " a . . . crudely made wooden lantern used by the Shakers at North Union" (Shaker Historical Society 1980, 13). Some antique dealers believe that items produced by the Shakers for sale do not have the same value as the items made by the Shakers for their own use. "Nearly all the artifacts in [the] museum are in the latter category" (Shaker Historical Society 1980, 13). Many of the artifacts in the museum's collection were donated by neighbors of the colony who had purchased items at the auction held when the colony was dissolved in 1889 (Shaker Historical Society 1980, 13). Unfortunately, many items were destroyed in the fire of 1890. Other artifacts were acquired by

trustees who, in the early days of the society, traveled to eastern Shaker colonies to purchase relics. Today artifacts are acquired through donations and purchases made by the Accessions Committee.

Within the past year the society has acquired a computer and is involved in reviewing software to meet its needs. It appears that an online union catalog of Shaker holdings is not on the immediate horizon. In a letter to the writer (see Appendix 1) Richard McKinstry, Director, Winterthur Library, notes that the Shaker librarians have met three times, since their original meeting in 1990, but the proposed venture of an online Shaker catalog has not become a reality (McKistry 1994).

Mrs. Groppe and Mrs. Winans point out that currently the society and the city are working together with other members of the community to identify and secure the disposition of future artifacts. The History Project, sponsored by the city of Shaker Heights, has committee members from the city, the Shaker Heights Public Library, the Shaker Historical Society and the Shaker Heights City School District. Other interested citizens serve as consultants to the project in their area of expertise. Most recently archivists have been making presentations to the committee.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Bojin and Tepper observe that museums offer a unique educational experience, that of "exposure to ideas and perspectives through observation of objects" (Bojin and Tepper 1985, 79). Museums " . . . teach through the experience of seeing, touching and understanding the object in relation to its original context" (Bojin and Tepper 1985, 80). They go on to assert that the museum library supports the educational process through its collection, staff and service. Bojin and Tepper see the library staff as "educational facilitators [who] supplement the learning activities in the galleries" (Bojin and Tepper 1985, 80). They view the museum library as a hybrid entity. One that has the "extensive collection and searching services of a research library, the current awareness programs of a special library and the general collections and public education activities of a community library" (Bojin and Tepper 1985, 85).

The Nord Library of the Shaker Historical Society strives to fulfill these varied roles. The society, at this time, seems poised to develop a more professional orientation. As it grows in this direction the library will necessarily grow to support it in its endeavors.

As one investigates the development of the Shaker Historical Society, an unbroken two-hundred-year time line emerges: from Mother Ann Lee's arrival in the United States in 1774; through the founding of the North Union Shaker colony in 1822; to the interest of photographer Louis Baus; to initiative founders of the Historical Society such as Elizabeth Nord; and generous benefactors like Frank Myers; a picture of a community working together to practice a lifestyle and preserve a heritage comes into focus.

Through the efforts of the society's current members the Shaker faith and lifestyle remain accessible to today's inquirer. Works by the Shakers such as Young's Testimony, known as the Shaker Bible, and Dunlavy's Manifesto as well as current interpretive works such as Deignan's Christ Spirit are available for study and reflection. Photographs, maps, newspaper clippings, letters and scrapbooks provide the inquirer with varied inroads into the unique history of the area.

Raymond Irwin's golden chain analogy poetically describes the relation between the library and the written word as they travel through history. He defines a library as a "community in which both reader and writer meet, to which both contribute something of value, mutually forging the links of the chain as it passes from mind to mind and from generation to generation" (Irwin 1957). The reader will find that such a

community exists at the Shaker Historical Society's Elizabeth Nord Library.

Winterthur

August 6, 1994

Ms. Bonnie Bolton
3284 Lansmere Road
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122

Dear Ms. Bolton:

Many thanks for your letter. The group of Shaker librarians mentioned in the article met three times, but unfortunately, nothing tangible came of our proposed venture. We had hoped to generate a union catalog of Shaker manuscripts from holdings at Winterthur, Canterbury Shaker Village, Hancock Shaker Village, The Shaker Museum, and the Sabbathday Lake community. Other repositories may also have been included as their collections were identified. Staff comings and goings at most of the places and other responsibilities have all conspired to defeat the project, though I still think it is worthwhile and hope someday to be able to follow through. My fondest memory was traveling to Sabbathday Lake to do the MARC presentation, where I stayed overnight in the Trustees House and shared meals with the Shakers who lived there.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

E. Richard McKinstry

E. Richard McKinstry
Librarian, The Joseph Downs Collection
of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera;
Winterthur Archivist

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